



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 4
ATLANTA FEDERAL CENTER
61 FORSYTH STREET
ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30303-8960

June 17, 2015

Mr. Mike Spaits
Eglin AFB Public Affairs Office
96 TW/ PA
101 West D Avenue, Room 238
Eglin AFB, FL 32542-5499

Subject: EPA's Comments on the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the proposed Gulf Regional Airspace Strategic Initiative (GRASI) Landscape Initiative at Eglin Air Force Base, Florida. CEQ No. 20150158

Dear Mr. Spaits:

Pursuant to Section 309 of the Clean Air Act (CAA) and Section 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Region 4 reviewed the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the proposed Gulf Regional Airspace Strategic Initiative (GRASI) Landscape Initiative at Eglin Air Force Base, Florida.

This FEIS is the result of the Gulf Regional Airspace Strategic Initiative (GRASI) region that consists of the eastern Gulf of Mexico region, which includes northwest Florida, southern Mississippi, lower Alabama, southern Georgia, and the eastern Gulf of Mexico. The GRASI is a collaborative planning effort between military and civilian leaders designed to ensure the future availability and capacity of regional airspace and training lands for military use and the continued economic prosperity of the Gulf coast. The GRASI Landscape Initiative (GLI) is a U.S. Air Force-led partnership with the State of Florida and federal agencies to expand the capacity of the region to safely host military test and training operations. This FEIS addressed locations in the Blackwater River State Forest (BRSF) and Tate's Hell State Forest (THSF) for general training operations, as well as small, noncontiguous land areas throughout the region for permanent and mobile radar emitter sites.

The EPA has reviewed the potential environmental impacts resulting from the implementation of the GRASI Landscape Initiative (GLI) in the region of northwest Florida. Based on the information provided in the FEIS, it appears that you have addressed our primary concerns for significant adverse impacts to public health and safety. The general protection levels for the proposed action ground operations provides adequate environmental resource protection.

In summary, EPA has no major remaining environmental concerns regarding this project, as proposed. EPA also supports a comprehensive monitoring program to ensure that the ongoing impacts from military training are assessed and appropriately addressed/mitigated once

identified. In addition, the general protection levels identified in the final EIS should be applied and adequately tracked and enforced to attain appropriate results.

Please provide us with a copy of the Record of Decision (ROD) when available.

We recommend that you continue to keep the community informed on the status of the GRASI Landscape Initiative. We appreciate your coordination with us. If you have any questions, please contact Larry Gissentanna of my staff at 404-562- 8248 (gissentanna.larry@epa.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Heinz Mueller", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Heinz J. Mueller, Chief
NEPA Program Office
Resource Conservation and Restoration Division